TRISAGION

for choir (TTBB *a capella*)

JACOB BERANEK

PROGRAM NOTES

Written as a synthesis of two cultures—the Western and Eastern Churches—this piece takes inspiration from elements of both traditions. The title, *Trisagion*, means "Thrice Holy" in Greek, and is the name of the standard Eastern Orthodox hymn from which this piece takes its lyrics. While the piece is sung in Greek (see translation below), the bridge between the Western and Eastern traditions can be found in the two different styles in which the lyrics are set. The first section is directly inspired by the free, meter-less chant typically found in the Eastern church, but there is a sudden shift when the lilting second section begins, in a Western church mode. The unifying element of the piece is a constant, fixed drone that is held throughout, passing from one voice to another constantly, allowing everyone to sing parts of the melody while still maintaining the drone. The first and second sections are repeated, and after growing more intense, the piece concludes with a resounding, eternal "Amen."

This piece is dedicated to Carl F. Smith, who provided the impassioned inspiration, constant encouragement, keen suggestions, and valuable time that helped make this composition possible.

—Jacob Beranek

TEXT

Ἅγιος ο Θεός, Ἅγιος ισχυρός, Ἅγιος αθάνατος, ελέησον ημάς.
(*Agios o Theos, Agios ischyros, Agios athanatos, eleison imas.*)
Holy God, Holy Strong, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us.

PERFORMANCE NOTE

This piece was specifically constructed to be singable for as large an ensemble as a full men's chorus, but also for as small as one singer per part. To facilitate this, the drone is always doubled by another voice (except from m. 35-37), in order to allow one singer to breathe while the other maintains the drone. Breath marks in parentheses have been added as suggestions if the piece is being performed one-on-a-part.

FIRST PERFORMANCE

December 12, 2017, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN
Matthew Youngblood and Christopher Elliott, tenors;
Anighya Crocker and Matthew Leon, basses

duration: c. 3' 30"
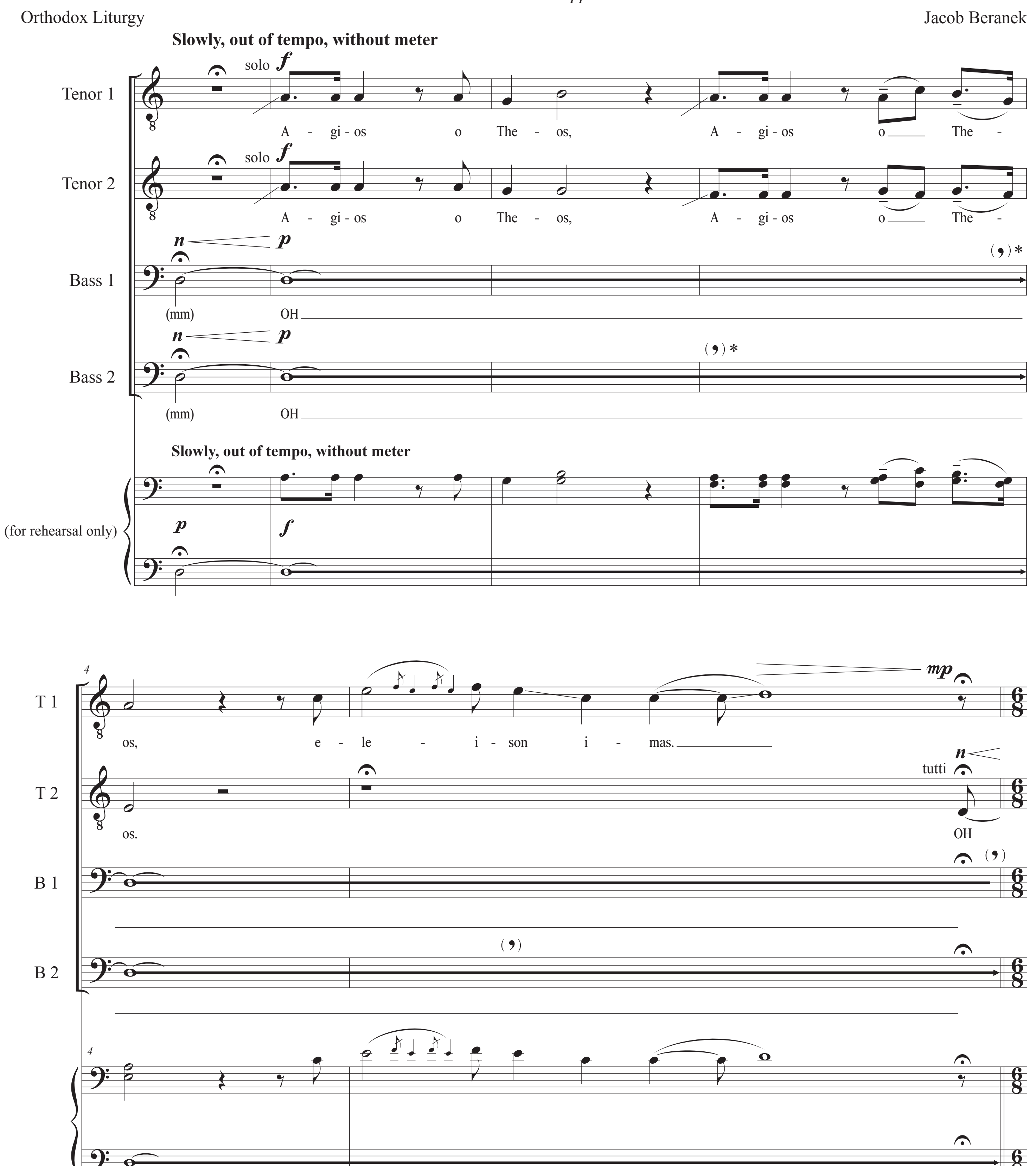
to Carl F. Smith

TRISAGION

TTBB *a cappella*
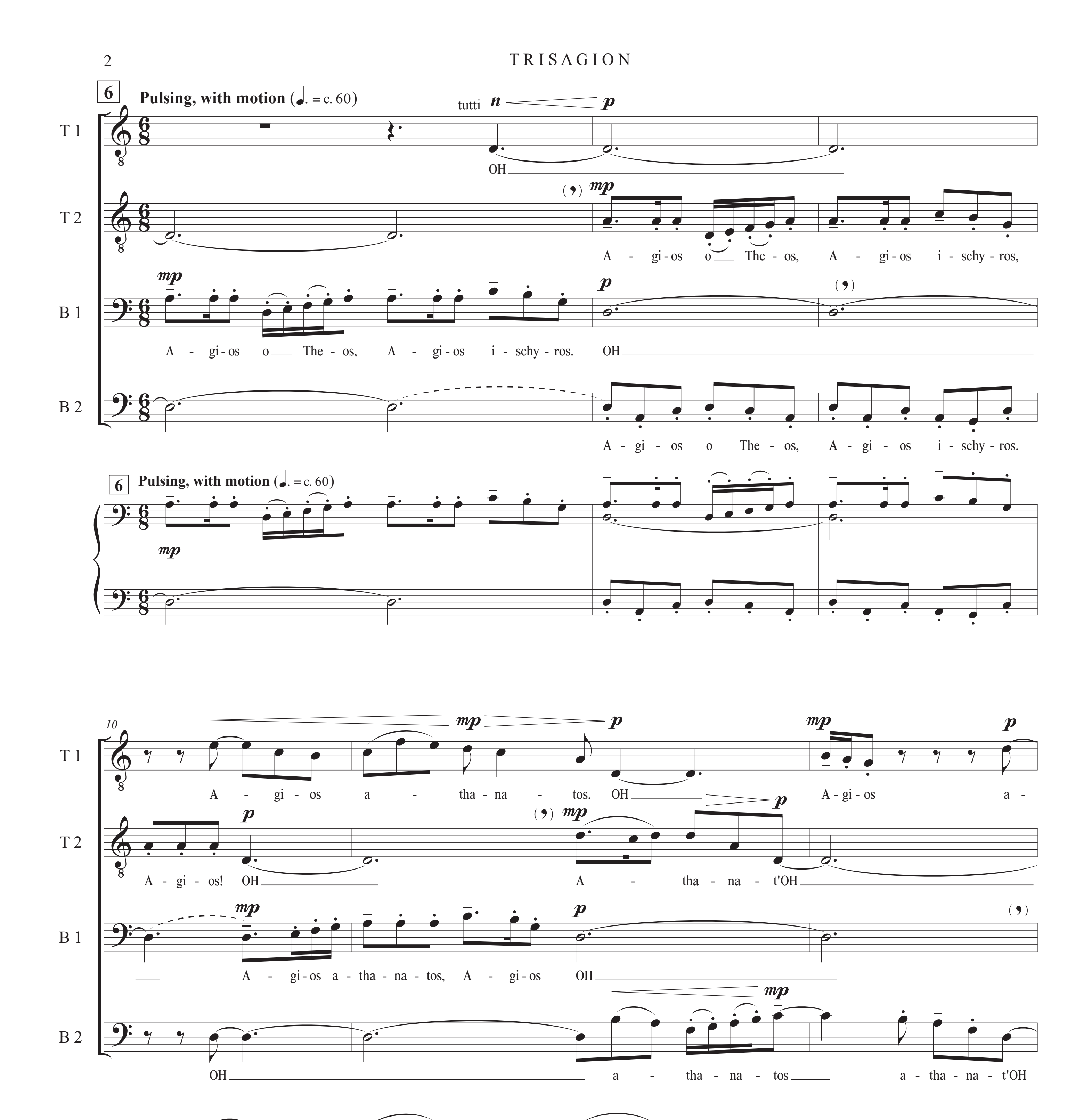
Orthodox Liturgy

Jacob Beranek



* See Performance Note, inside cover.

Text: from the Liturgical Texts of the Orthodox Church: Trisagion Service (PD).
Music: newly composed, copyright by composer.


6
Pulsing, with motion (♩. = c. 60)
tutti
T 1
T 2
B 1
B 2
OH
A - gi-os o Thе - os, A - gi-os i - schy-ros,
A - gi-os o The - os, A - gi-os i - schy-ros. OH
A - gi - os o The - os, A - gi - os i - schy-ros.
10
A - gi - os a - tha-na - tos. OH
A-gi-os a -
A - gi-os! OH
A - tha - na - t'OH
A - gi-os a - tha - na - tos, A - gi - os OH
OH
a - tha - na - tos
a - tha - na - t'OH